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AU NATUREL

SAM DAVID: A LIFELONG PASSION

Sam David

Artist's Statement

My work seeks to capture the emotional and physical implications of being nude in settings that are challenging and not without risk. I care as much about what a woman's face tells us about the experience as I do about her form and I hope that it shows in these images. Whether the images were created in studios or outdoors in my favorite places – my earliest partners in making beautiful images taught me to "let it come naturally." I do not "pose" the women with whom I am privileged to work. I show them the place and the direction of the light, put some Vivaldi on the player and ask my partners to be who they want to be in the moment we are at. In the instants before and after they come to that point, that is when their true feelings are exposed and their beauty and emotions the most natural.

Prints of most of my work are available through my website or you may contact me for custom printing or to schedule a photographic session at sam.david.photo@gmail.com. My website address is: www.samdavidphotography.com

Enjoy my work. Let it come naturally.

Portfolio Statement

I am not comfortable working in studios. I prefer the wildness and freedom of nature. Most of the women with whom I work feel the same way. I find the dimensions of a studio limiting, the proximity to these women frankly unnerving. The women feel much the same – their being so close to the lens an exposure uncomfortable beyond that of their nudity. Together we experience this breakdown of our defenses, face who each of us are in that moment and produce images startling in their intensity, their complexity and the beauty of their realism. Precious are the women who do this work with me, and precious are their images, captured here in the precious tones of platinum and silver.

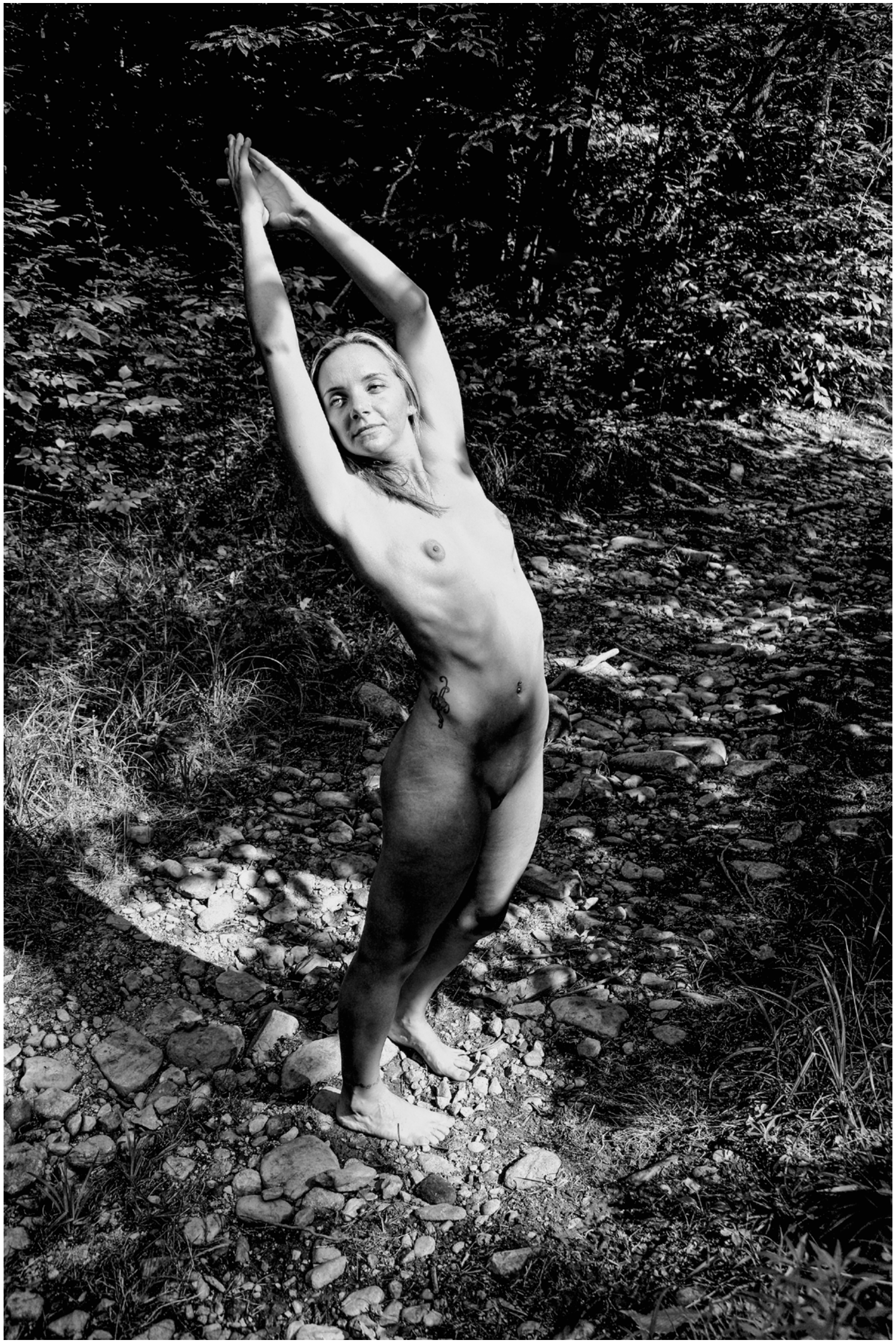
Enjoy these images and share the experience with us.

NATURAL NUDES IN NATURE'S WOODS – MEADOWS

There is something unsettling when you come across a meadow in an otherwise deep wood. The trees are protection – from the sun and wind, from a sudden shower, or from an unexpected visitor. Now, unexpectedly, in a meadow, you are out in the open.

Are you afraid? Are you worried you have lost the trail? Is it a place to rest from stepping on stones and roots and dodging snapping branches? Are you comforted by the return of the sun? Are you thrown back on your own thoughts? Or do you see an opportunity to do something you have never done before?

Coming across the unexpected changes the dynamic of being nude in the woods – and these images demonstrate the variety of responses we experienced. They run from pensive to joy, from wary to bold, from creating a look that is new to re-creating a look that many will recognize. They are very different, to be sure, but as are the women presented here, they are all very much Au Naturel.



ASHLEY -- FINDING A SUNBEAM ALONG A DARK TRAIL IN MAINE

CASSANDRA -- A SUNBEAM IN A FIELD IN POUND RIDGE BW

ELENA ALONE WITH HER THOUGHTS

GRETCHEN EMERGING FROM THE GREENS

HALEY IN THE SUNBEAM

JACS -- DEEP THOUGHTS IN DEEP WOODS

JACS -- ON ENTERING THE SWAMP

KATIE -- MOURNING EZRA POTTS

LOLA GRACE -- HOMAGE TO ANDREW WYETH

RUBY -- LOOKING BACK

SARAH IN HER FIELD IN MAINE

TIFFANIE IIN A MAINE FIELD

NATURAL NUDES IN NATURE'S WOODS – ROCKS

It is too simple to say that there is a simple reason why we admire images of beautiful women against a background of rocks. Certainly there is a wonderful contrast between the softness and curves of a woman's body and the angularity and hardness of a rock, a boulder or a cliff. But, many of the women with whom I make these images are as lean and angled as are the rocks on which they sit or climb. They are also tough enough to climb atop and drape themselves over them, to flex themselves into their crevices, and to hang from their edges in positions that are exceptionally challenging – especially to the photographer below fearing for their safety.

But that is also too simple. Yes, there are wonderful parallels between a woman's full figure and rocks that have been smoothed and curved by rushing waters, as well as contrasts between a full figure and a sheared cliff. And there are contrasts as well as parallels between smooth skin against the simple blacks, grays and pinks of some rocks, and the striations of rocks and cliff sides formed by millions of years of sedimentation.

Think also of the presumed coolness of rock and the warmth of the sun on the woman who chooses to use one as a place to rest, and perhaps warm herself after being nude in the crisp October winds.

It is not simple why we are so attracted to women with rocks – it is as complex as is nature and as are women and our feelings for them. It is Au Naturel.

CANDACE -- A SYSIPHUSIAN STUDY

CANDACE -- ON A POUND RIDGE ROCK

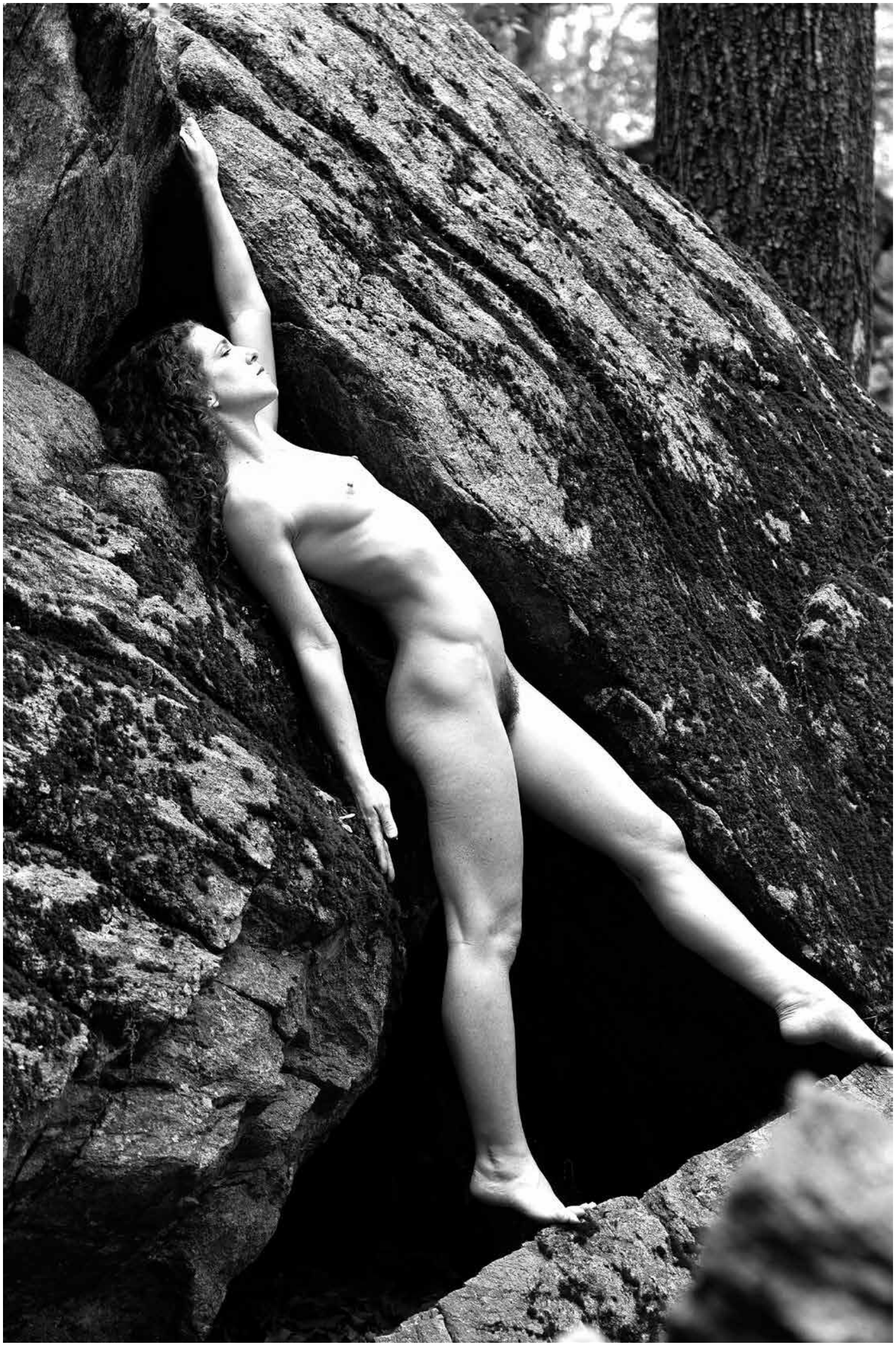
CASSANDRA RESTING IN A POUND RIDGE CAVE

HALEY ON THE EDGE

JACS -- ON A ROCK BED

KATIE -- SEEKING PEACE

KATIE -- ON A SUNNY ROCK IN MASSACHUSETTS



KEIRA - AN UPWARD CLIMB

KEIRA -- PURE ABANDON

KEIRA AND THE SUNBEAM

KEIRA’S IN HER CAVE

LOLA ON THE ROCKS

LOTUS BLOSSOM -- CURVES AND ROCKS

REBECCA ON THE ROCKS

SISI’S ROCK

TIFFANIE’S WALL IN MAINE

NATURAL NUDES IN NATURE'S WOODS — TREES

Is it the rough bark against the soft skin? Or the intertwining of limbs? The straightness of the spine matching the verticality of the trunk? Or, the parting of leaves and branches to allow sunbeams to come through?

The interplay between trees and the nude form of a beautiful woman creates endless opportunities. A tree might inspire playfulness, a platform for rest, a seat for contemplation. It can transform a back into a canvas, a torso into a sculpture, a face into a reflection of its surroundings.

As no tree in the woods is identical, neither are the women who pose among them, each bringing their own level of comfort and sense of adventure to each encounter, which can change with the look and the shape and the position of the tree immediately before them.

There is a particular joy in watching the encounter. That this meeting of the animate with the inanimate produces such strong, unmediated, unposed responses is the essence of what I seek photographing nudes in the woods. It is perfectly Au Naturel.

CAMI - ALONE ON HER TREE

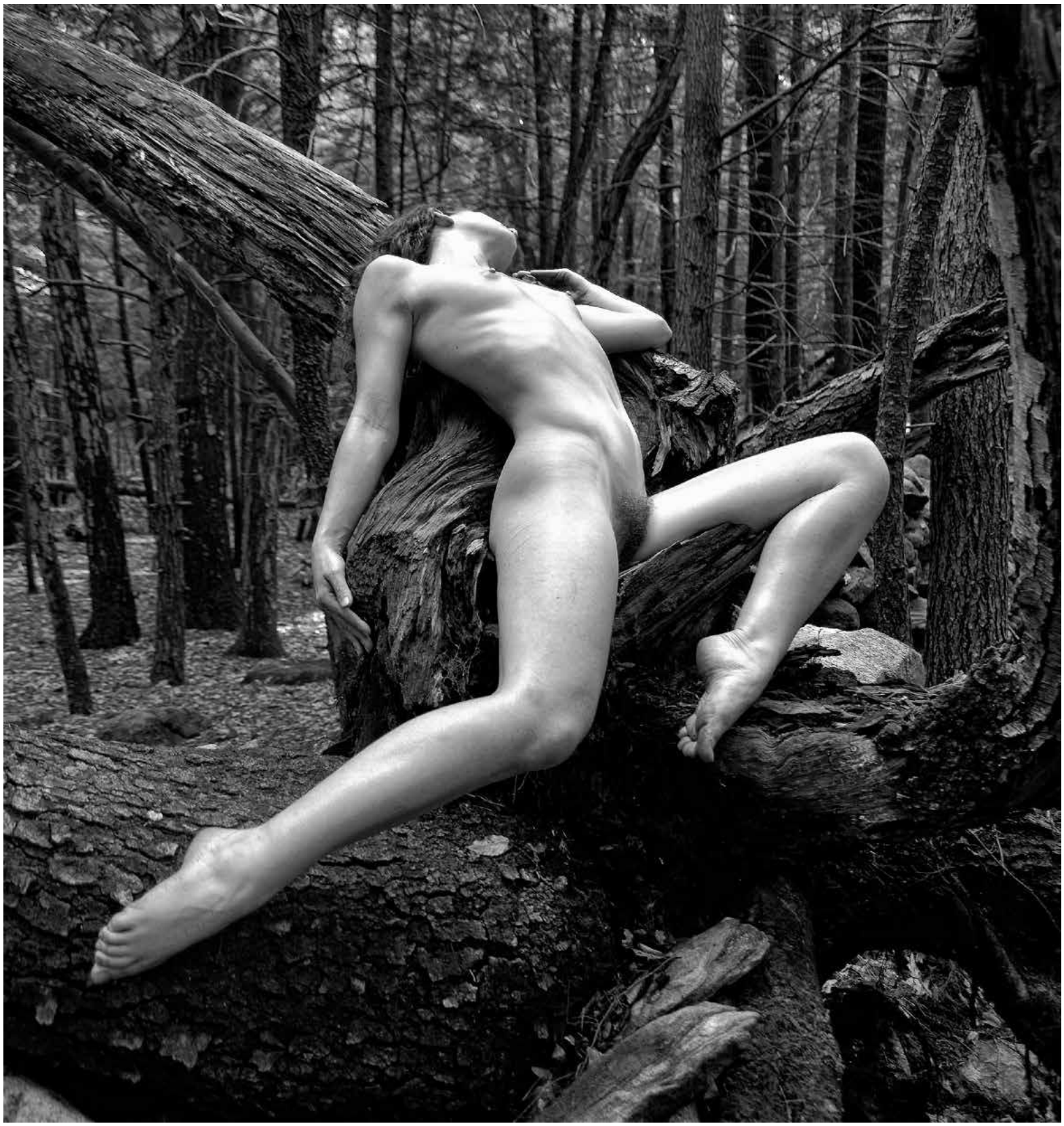
HALEY AND THE TREE ARE ONE

IVORY --THE TREE AND ITS SHADOW

KATIE -- A KAT UP A TREE

KATIE -- AWAKENING BETWEEN A PETRIFIED TREE AND A HARD PLACE

KATIE TURNS HER BACK INTO A CANVAS FOR THE SUN



KEIRA -- FORM ON FORM IN THE POUND RIDGE WOODS

KEIRA AT THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

MELISSA -- CURVE ON CURVE ON CURVE ON

MELISSA -- TIRED GIRL IN THE CROOK OF A TREE

MELISSA -- TREE HUGGER

RUBY -- CATCHING THE SUNBEAM ON THE TRAIL

NATURAL NUDES IN NATURE'S WOODS — WATERS

All life on earth emerged from its waters. Perhaps that helps us understand why women – who birth all human life – are so perfectly matched to the ponds, rivers and streams that flow through the Northeastern woods where I do most of my work.

These waters are rarely warm. Most begin in springs far underground. Summer comes late, autumn early and trees shield the waters from the warming sun. Entering the waters takes a woman's special fortitude. Not only is the water cold, most often the stream and pond beds in the woods are laced with stones and rocks dislodged during spring floods and with tree branches torn down under winter snows and summer thunderstorms.

The women with whom I am privileged to work enter these waters nude, unprotected from the physical challenges they may confront. But, as the images show, each does so with a comfort and a confidence that reflects knowing with the certainty of faith the powerfully unique and critically important character that women and waters share: from them – and only from them – life comes.

These are simple images. Beautiful women celebrating, contemplating, sharing and reflecting on their oneness with the waters in the woods. It is purely Au Naturel.

BEST FRIENDS IN A POUND RIDGE POND

CANDACE -- ALONE WITH HER THOUGHTS

DANCER

ELENA CONTEMPLATES ENTERING THE MILL STREAM

HALEY AND KAYLA -- THE TOUCH

IVY -- AS THE WATERS FALL THROUGH THE WOODS

JOY

KAYLA -- SLEEPING TO THE SOUND OF A PASSING STREAM

MICHELLE -- ALONG WEBB’S COVE IN MAINE

REBECCA -- DAPPLED BY THE LIGHT IN A POUND RIDGE POND

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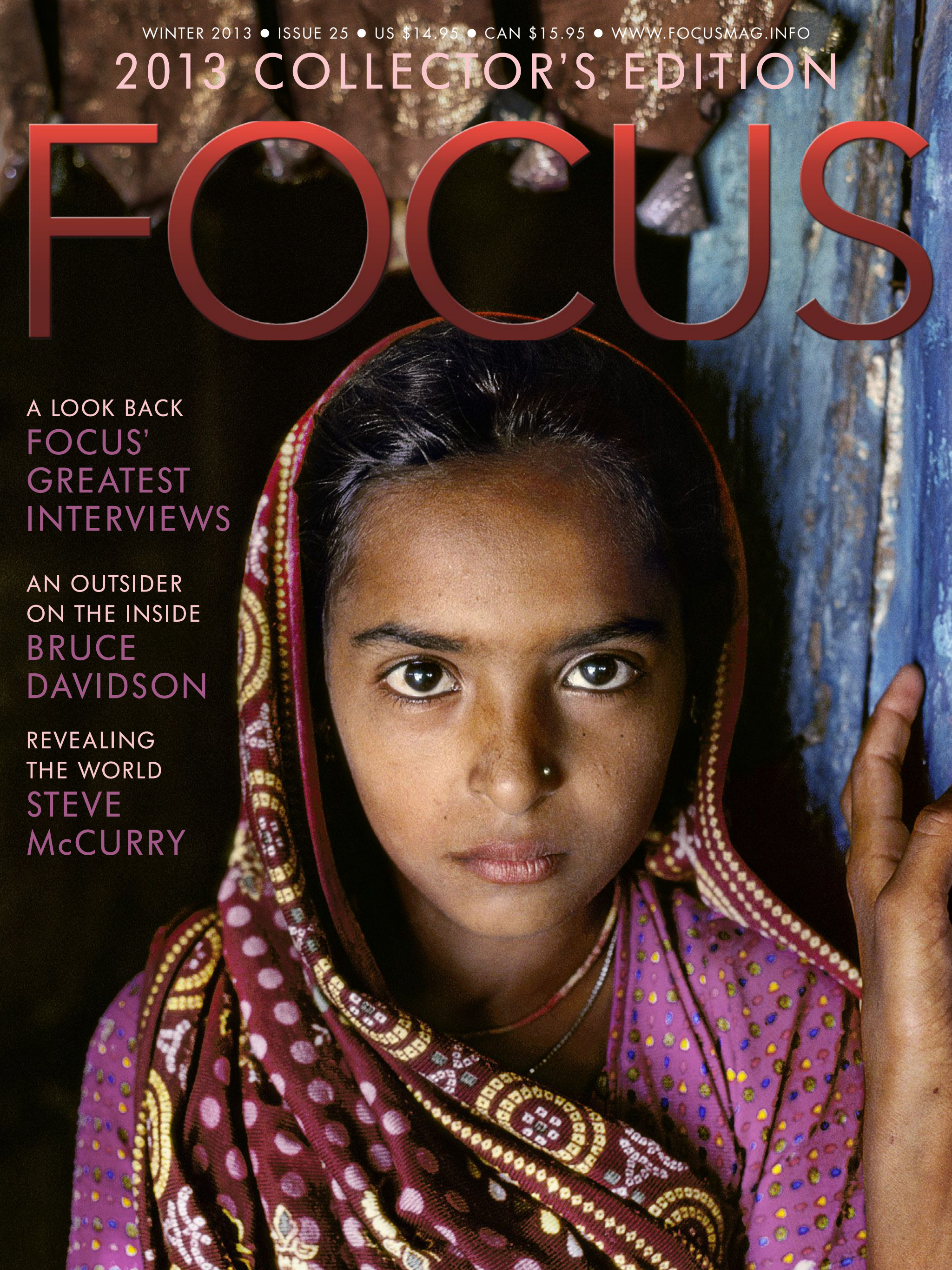

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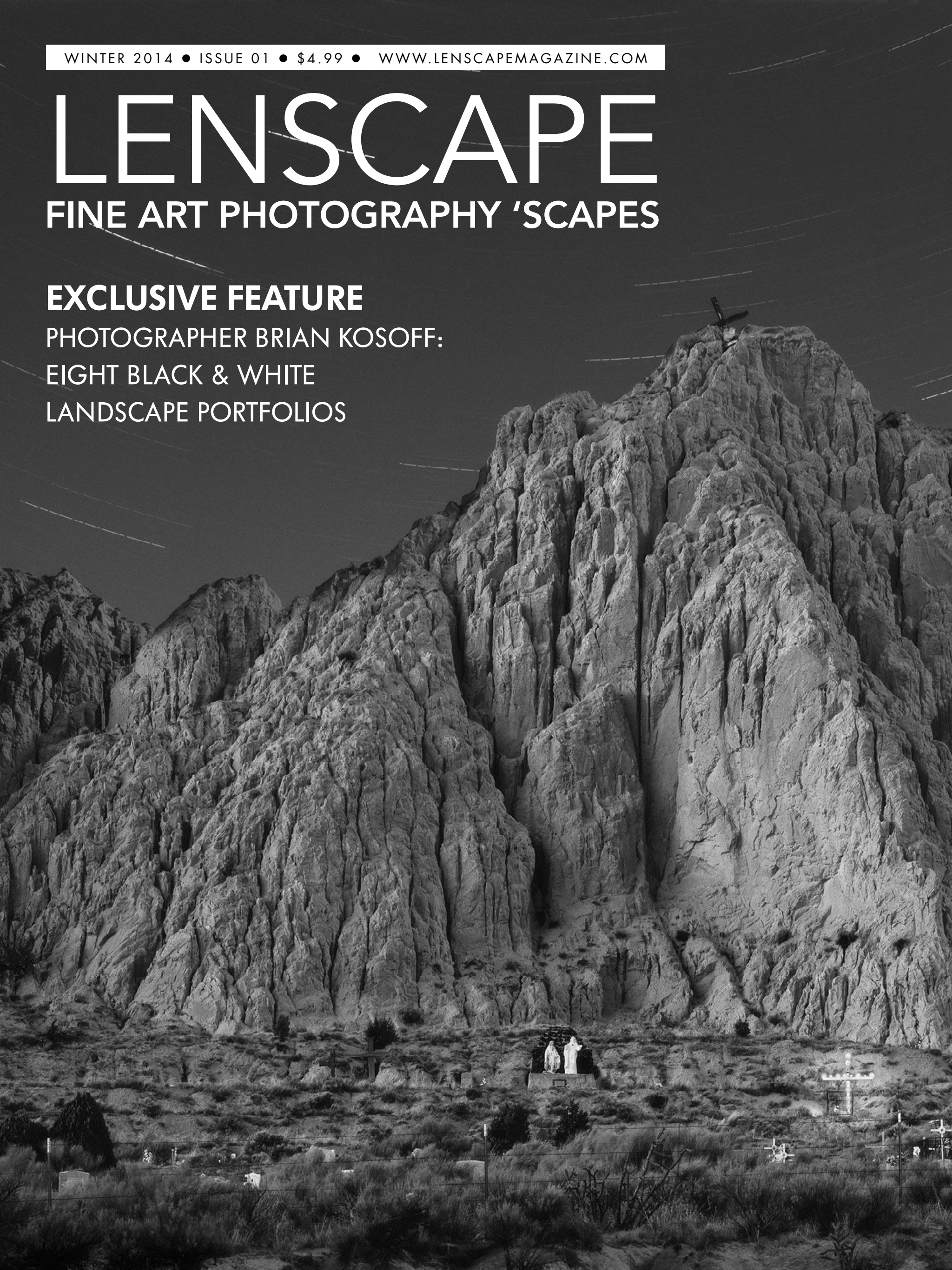

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